

## Air Force Research Laboratory provides program manager, Lt. Rachel Banner, an opportunity for travel and adventure

by Timothy Anderl, AFRL Headquarters

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, OHIO — Most don't view the cubicle "acrobatics" that members of the Air Force Research Laboratory participate in while they try to answer taskings as compelling. Nor does the "raceway" of e-mail traffic that appears in a steady flow to our inboxes as exciting, but 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Rachel Banner says that adventure is what has compels her to the lab. Both a fervor for learning and anticipating the desire of visitors to AFRL is what this member of AFRL's International Affairs says keeps things interesting.

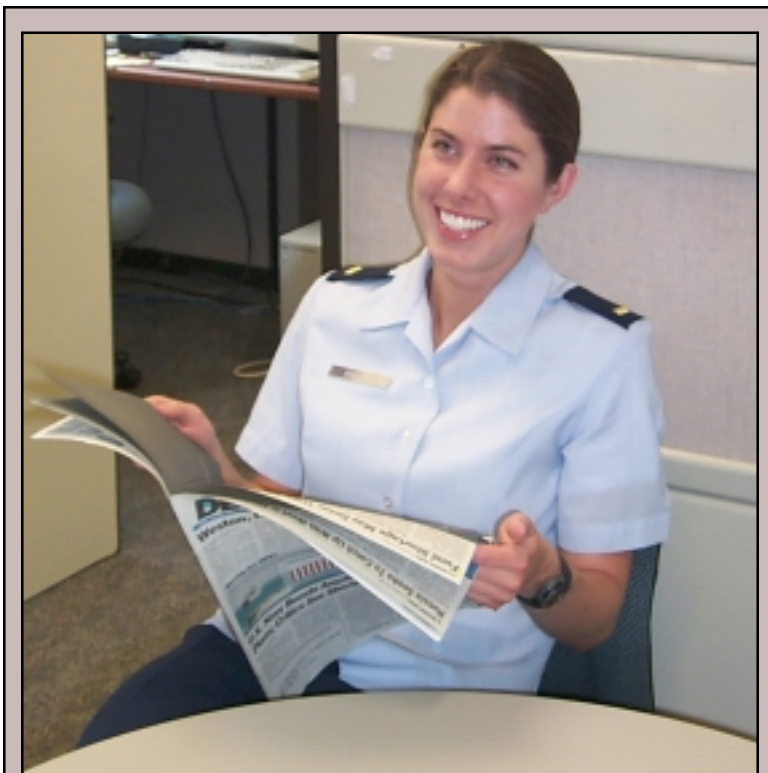
International Affairs, where Banner is a program manager, provides support for Brig. Gen. Paul Nielsen and other senior staff for the management and implementation of international forums. The division also coordinates foreign distinguished visitors at the lab and senior management overseas travel while balancing all other international taskings for AFRL Headquarters.

Banner says that while in high school in Alabama she applied for an Air Force scholarship. The scholarship took her to the University of Washington, Seattle, Wash. for her studies and brought her to AFRL in August 1998 where she started in acquisitions with the Manufacturing Technology (Mantech) Division of the Manufacturing and Engineering Systems Branch at the Materials and Manufacturing Directorate.

She became acquainted with Jeri Messenger, chief of the International Affairs Office, at a space symposium in Colorado where Banner had escorting duties. Messenger requested that Banner fill a vacant position with the directorate. Messenger was impressed with Banner's ability to interface with people of all levels, her interest in learning about different cultures and capabilities and her availability for the three year assignment.

A background in Atmospheric Science, in which she retained a degree, has provided Banner with a degree of foresight for her current position.

"Having a science background really helps you relate," Banner said "Having a background in physics, chemistry,



**A BIG SMILE** — Lt. Rachel Banner, a program manager in International Affairs, reads a copy of Defense News so she can stay abreast of any current affairs. International Affairs, which provides support for Brig. Gen. Paul Nielsen and other senior staff for the management, implements international forums. The division also coordinates foreign distinguished visitors at the lab and senior management overseas travel while balancing all other international taskings for AFRL Headquarters.

differential equations and other science disciplines — though in a very different context — has helped me understand what some of the objectives are in different programs."

Since Banner has been with the International Affairs, they have coordinated visits from the Japan Association of Defense Industry and the Canadian Forces School of Aerospace Studies, as well as international meetings with

several countries. A standard visit includes making sure that organizations receive briefings and access to information that will foster mutually beneficial cooperation between AFRL and visitors.

“When we host these visits it is interesting to see the different personalities and cultures involved,” Banner said. “Visitors typically attend briefings, and we’ve hosted dinners and tours. Our visitors have been gracious and serious about their pursuits but also know how to have a good time.”

Learning from her co-workers and preparing information for the international interfaces of Senior Air Force level staff, is another aspect of her position that keeps Banner enamoured with the lab. She said the office creates a background book, which includes information on the country, government, military and science and technology culture, when staff members travel outside of the country. Members of the office have also accompanied senior staff to countries such as Israel and Sweden.

When she is away from the lab, Banner’s pursuits are both athletically and intellectually challenging. She spends time jogging, cardio kick boxing, working out at Dodge and playing volleyball.

“I met another Lieutenant while I was at Acquisition Fundamentals [a training course] in Texas and she was interested in training for the Air Force marathon. She and I trained for and ran the marathon and I’d like to run a few more this year,” Banner said.

In addition Banner attends the Vineyard Church in Kettering and said she takes advantage of Wright State’s close campus for her continued education in accounting.

Since joining the Air Force, Banner has traveled laps around the country, met and observed skilled minds from several different countries and scientific disciplines, with just enough time left over to tone her body and mind for her next endeavor. What more could one ask for from an “adventure”? @